



# EASTSIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

COMMUNITY BASED  
HOUSING (CBH) PROGRAM


A Housing First Model

---



80% of  
homeless  
mothers are  
victims of  
Domestic  
Violence

National Center for Children in Poverty, 2010



Domestic Violence is a complex issue with no simple answers but it is simple for each of us to play a role in ending it. EDVP's **Housing First** program focuses on eliminating housing as a reason to stay in an abusive relationship.

**It's not safety that leads to independence;  
It's independence that leads to safety**



**D.V. Housing First is one strategy that  
helps survivors become independent**

# Domestic Violence Housing Myths

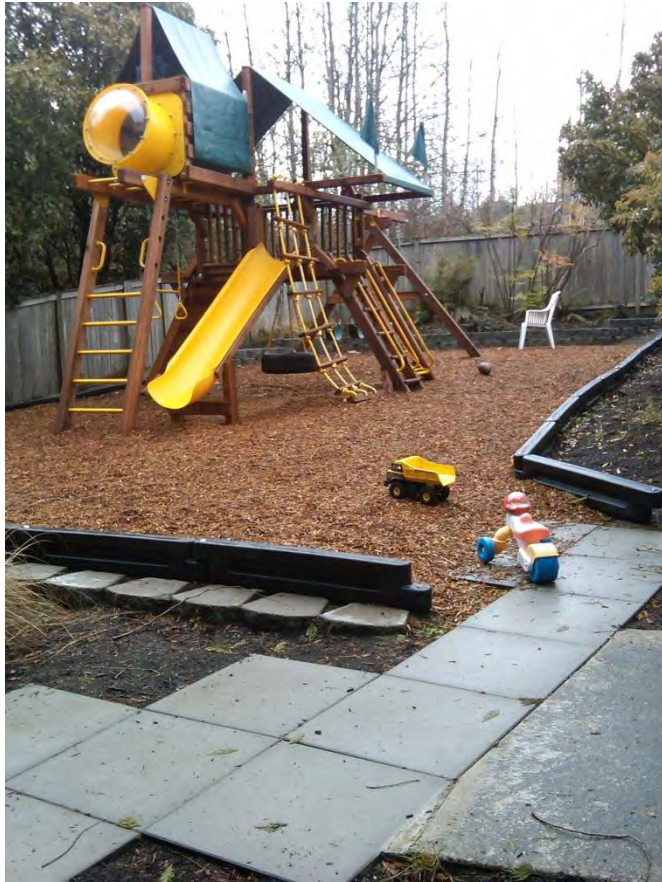
- Only access is via emergency shelter/secret/security
- Only DV advocates can address the issues
- DV survivors are only women
- Abuse has to occur for a specified amount of time or incident happened within a certain/recent amount of time
- Community attitudes about DV survivors won't change
- Housing DV survivors is dangerous
- Housing First is a handout or subsidy

# EDVP'S COMMUNITY BASED HOUSING PROGRAM

- Hotel/Motel Vouchers
  - Short term stays for immediate crisis needs
- Rental Assistance
  - Scattered-site (primarily fair market rental units) staffed by mobile advocates
  - 9-12 months of financial rental assistance
- Housing Stability Services
  - Short-term financial and/or non-financial assistance that support housing stabilization
  - Financial assistance → Flexible funds

# EDVP'S ADDITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

- “My Sister’s Home” Interim Housing Shelter Program
  - Individual, EDVP leased, apartment units
  - Up to 3 month stay
- “My Friend’s Place” Transitional Housing Program
  - Safe, confidential shelter with on-site chemical dependency treatment services
  - Communal facility based program
  - Up to 12 month stay
  - Intensive treatment and supportive services



## Evolution of EDVP's Housing Services



1982

Eastside Domestic Violence Program was incorporated

The first support group was started

Safe homes established (volunteers opened up their homes to survivors for short stays)

1983

The 24-hour crisis line started

Additional safe homes were added

1990

EDVP launched the Community Advocacy Program

Agency grew to 24 staff and an operating budget of over \$700,000

1992

EDVP opened the Eastside's first confidential shelter and provided comprehensive services "My Sister's Home"

1993-1996

Demand for shelter services grew

The confidential shelter provided 5,400 safe nights

1996-1998

EDVP strengthened its infrastructure for stabilization and growth

\$3.9 million capital campaign resulted in a new transitional housing program "My Friend's Place"

1999

The Community Housing Program was implemented, incorporating the use of hotel/motel vouchers

Setup EDVP's first permanent housing project "TSS (Transition to Self-Sufficiency)"

2000-2002

EDVP continues to grow with a staff of 75 (full and part-time)

Client needs continue to grow. Turn away rate 8:1

EDVP receives funding to provide rental assistance to families exiting shelter

2004

My Sister's Home Emergency Shelter moved into an apartment complex

Consequently, the capacity of My Friend's Place Transitional Housing expanded

2005

The number of families moving to transitional or permanent housing increased from 30-73%.

2006-2007

EDVP worked to expand the 'Housing First' model to support King County's 10-year-plan to eradicate homelessness.

Shelter turn-away rate increased to 19:1

The "Coming Home Program" was implemented providing permanent, supportive housing for single women

2009-2011

EDVP is selected to participate in D.V. housing first pilot program through WSCADV and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

EDVP's housing services incorporates a housing stability component for homelessness prevention

Request for services increases dramatically due to recession.

EDVP provides housing to an additional 128 households

Shelter turn-away rate remains stable at 18:1

**2012**

# Housing First Services

## Program Overview (Year Three)

EDVP's Housing Stability Program aims at increasing opportunities for individual to live a life free of abuse and oppression, eliminating economic factors, including lack of housing, as a reason to stay in an abusive relationship.

Our focus is on:

- Community outreach and engagement efforts;
- Increasing stock of affordable and attainable housing options;
- Increasing awareness around economic justice/economic opportunity/poverty;
- Specialized, flexible, and survivor driven services; and
- Marketing, messaging, and sustainability efforts.



# Approach

“There are so many systemic barriers, challenges, and injustices that our survivors face, for them to receive housing, feels just.”

-EDVP Housing Stability Advocate

# DV Housing First approach defined by a set of principles that include:

- ◉ Safety planning
- ◉ Housing stability
- ◉ Awareness of abuser sabotage
- ◉ Trauma informed
- ◉ Voluntary services/minimal program requirements
- ◉ Bringing services to survivors/mobile advocacy/home visits



## Key Elements

- Survivor driven
- Voluntary services
- *Individualized & flexible* advocacy & support services
- Safety and housing stabilization prioritized
- Easily accessible
- Mobil Advocates



# Eligibility

“I didn’t have the pressure that I needed to say or do the right thing in order to get help. They made it easy to be me and free to be honest from the get-go. It was life saving!”

-Domestic Violence Survivor

“EDVP is more valuable than water some days. I wouldn’t have survived without them”



Only requirement:

Individuals and Families that  
have been impacted by  
Domestic Violence

# Access

- Through current housing program (emergency shelter, transitional housing, etc.)
- Through Crisis Line (self-referrals)
- Through our agencies Community Outreach Advocates
- Through Partner agency referrals

# Prioritization

- First come, first serve
- Lethality
- Multiple Barriers
- Hardest to serve in “traditional” housing programs (i.e. Gay male survivors, large families, cultural needs, pets, etc. etc.)

# Screening

- Conversation.
- Individualized. Advocates job is to listen to what the survivor is wanting in order to help connect with appropriate resources and services for their needs.

## MSH PHONE SCREENING

Tell me about what's been going on and why you are looking for shelter today.

Use the following to guide your conversation to ensure that you remember the most important points:

### DV RELATIONSHIP

### Worship of animals?

Length of relationship?

Married/Dating/Cohabiting/Divorced together?

Police break ups/separations?

Police involvement/court orders/other court proceedings?

## SAFETY

## Weapons?

### Stalking/abusing/monitoring?

Thermocouples?

**Swallow identity/ threats?**

suavization/choking?

Physical abuse=1

Use of children/child again?

At home, I was a very busy person.

Isolation?

## ACCESSIBILITY

Children? Ages and genders?

Does family members/friends who need to come to shelter?

Language/LEP?

Country of origin

### LADDER PROTOCOL

How do you identify your garden?

Gender of partner?

**Nature of relationship?**

indicators for further assessment are:

- a. The identified abuser of this caller is a woman.
- w. The identified abuser of this caller is the same gender as the caller.
- f. The caller is trans identified or in a relationship with a trans identified person (if they tell you).
- v. The caller identifies as abusive or violent to their partner.

If, in the course of assessment, any of these indicators are present, consult with a manager or other advocate before passing to clients or admitting.

# Program Delivery

“the likelihood of the [survivor] getting that voucher back without someone with the knowledge of the laws would have been low. The collaboration between the Domestic Violence Housing First Program, the survivor, legal systems, the local Housing Authority and the landlord made it possible for this woman to keep safe, affordable housing. Now she can truly focus on rebuilding a life that is hers.”

## Light Touch

- Simple, discrete needs that can be met quickly. For example: paying one month rent, childcare, installing locks, paying utilities, or paying for a professional license fee. The client may not need to be seen or helped after their discrete need is met.

## Medium Touch

- Discrete needs met as with light touch, plus the client is connected with some of the services of the DV agency, such as support groups, legal advocacy, or continuing advocacy. Housing is identified and obtained relatively quickly.

## High Need

- Needing all of the services of light and medium touch clients, plus long term and intensive engagement with an advocate is needed to obtain housing, improve financial situation, and preserve safety.



## *Eastside Domestic Violence Program- Community Based Housing Program*

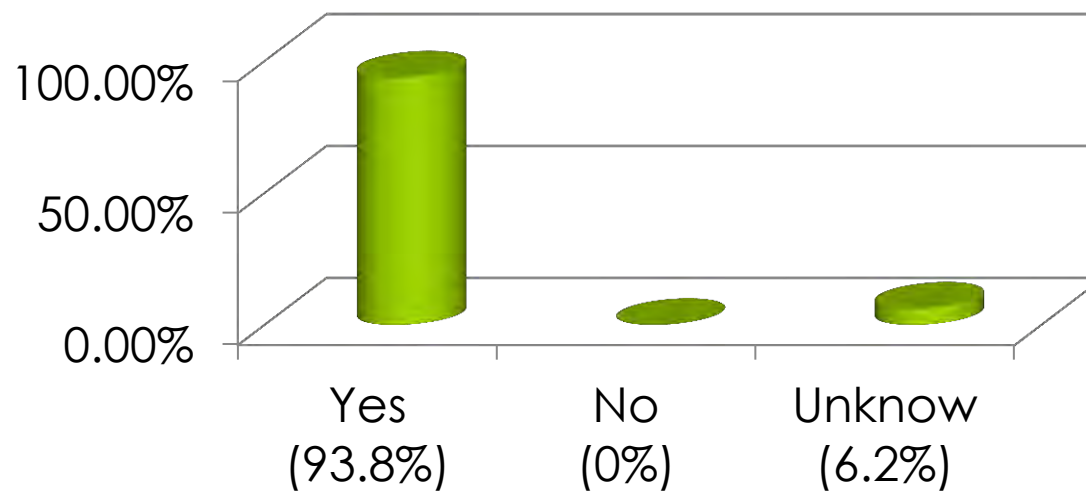
### *Housing Advocacy and Support Services*



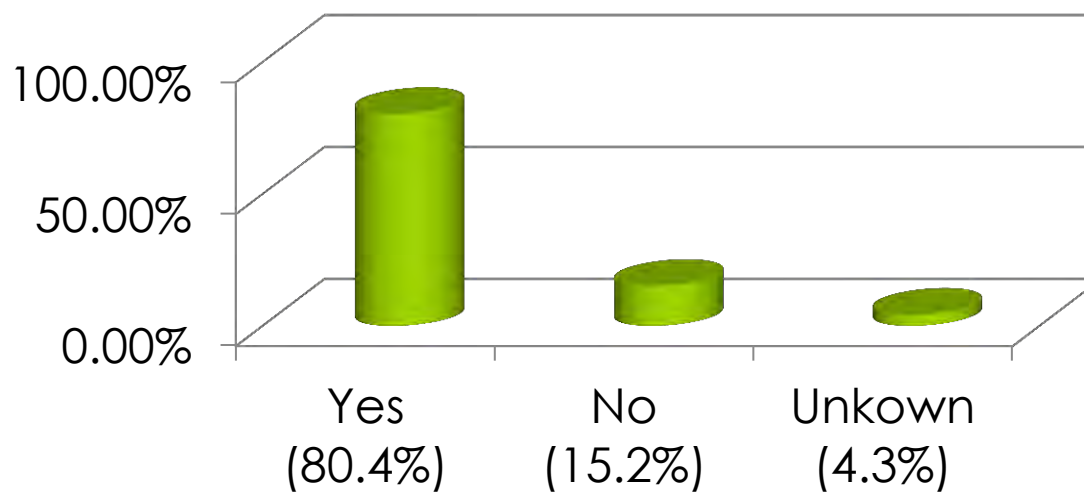
# Partnerships- *Vital!*

- Community Landlords, managers, and property owners
- King county and Seattle Housing Authority
- Low income housing providers
- County DV agencies
- Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)
- DSHS
- Local mental health service providers
- Local chemical dependency services (THS)
- Area resources

**Participants who remained in  
permanent housing *6 months* after  
her/his intake into DV Housing First  
services**



**Participants who remained in  
permanent housing *12 months* after  
her/his intake into DV Housing First  
services**



# Successful investments

Of those participants that received financial assistance from March 2010 through July 2011 through EDVP's Housing Stability Program

- **67%** were **1** time assists
- **15%** people needed assistance **2** times
- **7%** people required assistance **3** times
- **6%** people required assistance **4** times
- **5%** people required assistance **5** or more times

# Why Housing First Works for DV Survivors

- Issues that may have contributed to the instability can be addressed once safely housed.
- Safety planning for family or individuals needs
- Built in support system to combat batterers sabotage addressing trauma
- Nothing is a requirement, everything is offered and optional
- Survivor centered advocacy
- A housing specific advocate
- DV support every step of the way
- Flexible financial support and flexible advocacy



## Suggestions for funding, policy, and programmatic improvements that could be made:

- All agencies providing basic needs (food, shelter, emergency care) should address domestic violence.
- Increasing housing assistance and stability has the potential to make large changes in clients' lives.
- Community education to increase support by family and friends can improve safety and stability
- Flexible services and funding should be designed to respond to the specific needs of survivors.
- Appropriate screening for danger and providing survivors with the opportunity to explore more deeply their experiences and situation can lead to empowerment and better outcomes.

# Challenges

- ◉ **Lack of affordable housing**
- ◉ Systemic barriers
- ◉ Budget cuts, unstable funding sources
- ◉ New way of thinking- change is always hard
- ◉ Letting agencies core values and mission guide services not funding



# Organization change, lessons learned

- Strong leadership
  - “Leaders lead by following”
- Create culture where it is okay and encouraged to challenge “the way it’s always been done”.
- Okay to switch gears
- Not being afraid of failure
  - “Lessons learned from failures lead to the best successes”

